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ABSTRACT

The Vermont Interagency Coordinating Council for Families, Infants and Toddlers (VICC) was established by federal law to advise the Vermont Department of Education and the Agency of Human Services on the statewide system of early intervention services for families of children with special needs, ages birth to three. In Vermont, the early intervention system is known as the Family, Infant and Toddler Project. Every family of an infant or toddler referred for evaluation and early intervention services has the right to family-centered, comprehensive service coordination. In response to a statewide need expressed by families and service providers, the VICC has worked to develop standards for service coordination in early intervention. These standards reflect Vermont's family-centered, community-based, interagency service delivery model, illustrating what every qualified, agency-supported service coordinator should know and be able to do to support families of children with special needs. A self-assessment instrument is included in this booklet to assist coordinators to determine their strengths and training needs. Families might also find the self-assessment useful to learn what they should expect from their service coordinator. (Author)

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Standards for Service Coordination in Early Intervention

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The Vermont Interagency Coordinating Council for Families, Infants and Toddlers

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Families and Providers:

The Vermont Interagency Coordinating Council for Families, Infants and Toddlers (VICC) was established by federal law to advise the Vermont Department of Education and the Agency of Human Services on the statewide system of early intervention services for families of children with special needs ages birth to three. In Vermont, the early intervention system is known as the Family, Infant and Toddler Project.

Every family of an infant or toddler referred for evaluation and early intervention services has the right to family-centered, comprehensive service coordination. In response to a statewide need expressed by families and service providers, the VICC has worked to develop standards for service coordination in early intervention. These standards reflect Vermont's family-centered, community-based, interagency service delivery model, illustrating what every qualified, agency-supported service coordinator should know and be able to do to support families of children with special needs.

The VICC and Family, Infant and Toddler Project will continue to sponsor regional trainings designed to assist service coordinators to achieve these standards. A self-assessment instrument has been included in this booklet to assist coordinators to determine their strengths and training needs. Families might also find the self-assessment useful to learn what they should expect from their service coordinator.

On behalf of the VICC, we are proud to share these service coordination standards with you.

Frances Cloutier
Co-Chair

Wayne L. Fox
Co-Chair

Service Coordination

Service coordination includes assistance and services provided by a service coordinator to all eligible children and their families who request services. Service coordination activities are those which assist and enable eligible children and their families to receive the rights, procedural safeguards, and services that are authorized to be provided under Vermont's early intervention program.

Service coordination is at no cost to families and is an active ongoing process. Families will be able to connect with service coordination through the programs in which they receive services or through the community's regional Core Team of the Family, Infant and Toddler Project of Vermont.

Service coordination is broadly defined and includes the various public agencies providing early intervention services in the overall collaborative effort.

The features of Vermont's overall service coordination effort include:

- designating a single service coordinator who assists in coordinating services across agencies, and is a single point of contact in helping families obtain the services and assistance they need and have identified;
- assisting families in gaining access to the early intervention services and other services which have been identified in the Individualized Family Service Plan;
- coordinating the provision of early intervention services and other services that the child needs or is being provided;
- facilitating the timely delivery of available services;
- continuously seeking the appropriate services and supports necessary to benefit the development of each child and family; and
- continuously assisting the family to successfully enlarge their role and responsibilities in service coordination for their own child.

Service coordination activities also include:

- coordinating evaluations and assessments;
- participating in and facilitating the family's involvement in the development, review, and evaluation of the Individualized Family Service Plan;
- assisting families in identifying service providers;
- coordinating and monitoring the delivery of available services;
- providing families with information about advocacy services;
- supporting and enhancing families' opportunities for coordinating services and community supports for their children and family;
- assisting in coordination with medical and health providers; and
- facilitating the development of transition plans to preschool services when appropriate.

Service coordination will not only involve linkages to services provided by agencies, but will facilitate utilization of community resources and natural supports to families.

Standards for Service Coordination in Early Intervention

The candidate will demonstrate the ability to fulfill the role of service coordinator in a manner that: 1) recognizes and supports the family as the constant in the child's life; 2) recognizes and supports the family's role in service coordination; and 3) facilitates the accomplishment of the outcomes identified in the Individualized Family Service Plan.

1. FAMILY-CENTERED APPROACH

Service coordinators should be able to: 1) enable families to play a central role in defining the types of services appropriate for their child and family, 2) respond to family-identified concerns and priorities, and 3) enhance the capacity of families to meet the needs of their children.

Service coordinators will address the following standards:

1.1 identify and discuss the implication of the principles underlying a family-centered approach to service delivery.

1.2 identify program policies and practices that are not consistent with the family-centered approach.

1.3 evaluate personal strengths and needs related to working with families and develop an action plan to address personal development needs.

1.4 provide services that are consistent with the family-centered approach.

1.5 embody the characteristics of a family-centered early intervention practitioner.

a. create opportunities for the family to share priorities, resources, and concerns while being sensitive to the cultural values of the family.
b. respect the different roles of family members within the cultural context of the family.
c. recognize and build upon family-identified strengths and abilities, and communicate with families in a culturally competent manner.

d. gather information and communicate with families in a way that is sensitive to family members' feelings and protects families' confidentiality.
e. encourage families to identify and utilize informal networks for support.
f. promote the acquisition of family knowledge, skills, and strengths.
g. acknowledge and respond to family-identified needs.
h. include families in all planning and decision-making activities at whatever level families choose to participate based on their values, resources, and priorities.
i. facilitate the development of assessment and intervention plans that respect family values and styles of decision making and are shaped by family priorities and information needs as well as by child characteristics and diagnostic concerns.
j. facilitate services in a way that promotes family continuity in daily living in a location that best serves the needs of the child and the family.
k. coordinate appointments with other service providers.
l. strengthen family-community linkages.
m. recognize and respond to a family's changing information needs.
n. provide opportunities for families to reflect upon the services they receive and act upon the information in a constructive manner.
o. acknowledge own limits and professional abilities.

2. PLANNING AND ACCESSING SERVICES

Service coordinators should be able to clearly articulate best practices as they relate to the development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of collaborative, community-based, family-centered early intervention services. Service coordinators should be able to address the developmental, educational, and socio-emotional needs of young children with special needs and their families through integrated services that support: 1) the child's development and skill acquisition through appropriate learning activities and promotion of positive, mutually satisfying family-child and child-child interactions; 2) the family's knowledge of and ability to access and utilize resources; and 3) an interdisciplinary approach that requires staff and family members to work collaboratively as a team.

Service coordinators will address the following standards:

2.1 access, use and share with other team members information and resources about current trends and practices in therapeutic, developmental, educational and medical interventions.

2.2 understand the components of a comprehensive, early intervention service delivery system.

2.3 integrate current law, regulations and best practices for comprehensive early intervention services.

2.4 understand and communicate family rights and procedural safeguards.

2.5 collaborate in partnership with families to plan, implement, and evaluate early intervention services which respect the culture of each family, based upon family-identified resources, priorities, and concerns.

3. INDIVIDUALIZED FAMILY SERVICE PLAN (IFSP)

Service coordinators should be able to work with families and individuals from a variety of agencies and disciplines to develop, implement, and evaluate an Individualized Family Service Plan that is responsive to family-identified concerns and priorities as they relate to their child within the context of their family.

Service coordinators will address the following standards:

3.1 articulate the philosophical and conceptual framework for developing Individualized Family Service Plans.

3.2 understand the legal and regulatory requirements of the Infant and Toddler component of IDEA.

3.3 identify and discuss the components of an Individualized Family Service Plan process with families and other team members.

3.4 monitor and review Individualized Family Service Plans for any needed changes and ensure implementation of outcomes in the Individualized Family Service Plan.

4. TRANSITION PLANNING

Service coordinators should be able to clearly articulate best practices as they relate to effective, family-centered transition planning for families and children as the child's third birthday approaches. Service coordinators should understand that transition is a process which requires time and ongoing planning.

Service coordinators will address the following standards:

4.1 understand and articulate the legal and regulatory requirements of the Infant and Toddler component of IDEA for transition planning at age 3.

4.2 ensure that families have access to information about the transition process and opportunities for being active partners in the process.

4.3 assist families in initiating and implementing the transition process whenever the family believes it is necessary.

4.4. provide families with opportunities to identify goals and expectations for their child's transition, their desired level of participation in the transition planning, and the types of information and support necessary to facilitate the transition for their child and themselves.

5. LEGISLATION AND THE VERMONT SYSTEM

Service coordinators should have a knowledge of state and federal legislation and policies that impact the design and implementation of a comprehensive early intervention service delivery system for eligible infants and toddlers and their families.

Service coordinators will address the following standards:

5.1 Federal Legislation

a. understand the intent of Congress in implementing the Infant and Toddler component of IDEA.

b. understand and communicate legal requirements and regulations of the Infant and Toddler component of IDEA.

c. identify and discuss the relationship between Part C and Part B services, specifically with regard to the transition planning process.

5.2 Vermont System

a. collaborate with various agencies and programs to implement the Family, Infant and Toddler Project.

b. understand the components of the Family, Infant and Toddler Project in relationship to Vermont's unified system of early childhood services.

c. identify discrepancies between existing program policies and those required by the Infant and Toddler component of IDEA.

d. identify strategies for changing existing program policies and practices.

5.3 Federal Legislation and the Vermont System

a. describe how each of the fourteen minimum components of the Infant and Toddler section of IDEA fits into Vermont's service delivery system.

6. COMMUNICATION

Service coordinators should have appropriate communication skills for coordinating and facilitating family coordination of comprehensive, family-centered, culturally sensitive early intervention services.

Service coordinators will address the following standards:

6.1 gather and use information in ways that protect the confidentiality of families' lives.

6.2 actively listen in a manner that encourages sharing of thoughts and concerns.

6.3 identify the need for and access appropriate modes of communication (e.g., sign language interpreters, foreign language interpreters, large print literature) and are sensitive to varying levels of literacy.

6.4 describe information and service options in non-biased culturally sensitive language.

6.5 communicate with families, agencies, and providers to meet family and service provider needs for information and resources.

6.6 collaborate as team members to facilitate problem solving and decision making.

6.7 support and enhance families' opportunities for coordinating services and community supports for their children and family.

7. COMMUNITY/REGIONAL/STATE RESOURCES

Service coordinators should have a knowledge of local, regional and state resources that may be available to support the implementation of early intervention services.

Service coordinators will address the following standards:

7.1 network to find information and resources and create solutions.

7.2 perform community mapping to identify accessible resources for families and other service providers.

7.3 acknowledge available local, regional and state resources through electronic databases, printed resource guides and personal experience.

SELF-ASSESSMENT

Standards for Service Coordination in Early Intervention

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SELF-ASSESSMENT

On the self-assessment checklist indicate your level of achievement of each standard by checking the appropriate box:

U = *Unfamiliar with/little or no knowledge related to the standard*
N = *Novice/familiar with standard awareness level*
K = *Knowledgeable/can identify and discuss standard*
A = *Application/knowledgeable and can appropriately apply the standard*

FAMILY-CENTERED APPROACH	U	N	K	A
1. I fully understand the principles of family-centered service delivery in early intervention.				
2. I provide services that are consistent with a family-centered approach.				
3. I am sensitive to the cultural values of the families I work with.				
4. I recognize and build upon family-identified strengths and abilities.				
5. I provide ongoing opportunities for family members to share concerns, needs and priorities.				
6. I include families in all planning and decision-making activities at whatever level families choose to participate.				
7. I facilitate the development of assessment and intervention plans that respect family values and are shaped by family priorities and child needs.				

PLANNING AND ACCESSING SERVICES	U	N	K	A
1. I am able to develop programs for infants and toddlers that are child-centered and developmentally and individually appropriate.				
2. I understand the concept of "natural environments" and its implication for service delivery.				
3. I am able to access information and resources about current trends in early intervention.				
4. I understand and am able to communicate family rights and procedural safeguards.				
5. I collaborate in partnership with families to plan, implement and evaluate early intervention services which respect the culture of each family.				
INDIVIDUALIZED FAMILY SERVICE PLAN				
1. I understand the conceptual framework for developing Individualized Family Service Plans.				
2. I understand the legal and regulatory requirements as they pertain to the Individualized Family Service Plan.				
3. I am able to facilitate the Individualized Family Service Plan team to assure family priorities are addressed.				
4. I am able to identify and work through the components of the Individualized Family Service Plan with families.				
TRANSITION PLANNING				
1. I understand and can communicate legal and regulatory requirements as they relate to transition.				
2. I am able to provide information to families and assist them in the transition planning process.				
3. I provide opportunities for families to identify goals and expectations for their child's transition.				

LEGISLATION AND THE VERMONT SYSTEM	U	N	K	A
1. I understand and can communicate the legal requirements and regulations of the infant and toddler component (Part C) of IDEA.				
2. I understand and can articulate the components of the Vermont Family, Infant and Toddler Project and its relationship to other early childhood services.				
3. I am able to identify discrepancies that may exist between my program's policies, the State Project and federal IDEA policies and regulations.				
4. I can describe the 14 minimum components of Part C of IDEA and how they fit into Vermont's service delivery system.				
COMMUNICATION				
1. I am able to communicate with families using non-biased, culturally sensitive language.				
2. I am able to support and enhance family opportunities for coordinating services for their children and family.				
3. I communicate regularly with service providers to support collaboration and coordination of services.				
COMMUNITY/REGIONAL/STATE RESOURCES				
1. I can map my community to identify accessible resources for families and other service providers.				

Family, Infant and Toddler Project Information

Region	Local Number	Toll Free Number
Addison	388-1437	1-800-639-1577
Bennington	447-2768	1-800-750-6975
Caledonia/ South Essex	748-0213	1-800-299-6609
Chittenden	655-5216 VOICE/TTY	1-800-870-6758 VOICE/TTY
Franklin/ Grand Isle	524-7959 VOICE/TTY	1-800-870-6720 VOICE/TTY
Lamoille	888-5229	1-800-639-1932
Orange/ Windsor	649-3268	1-800-639-0039
Orleans/ Essex	334-3324	1-800-253-6621
Rutland	747-5039	1-800-974-2034
Washington	476-8784	1-800-270-4231
Windham	258-2414	1-800-281-7852
Windsor South	886-5242	1-800-808-4442
Central Referral	655-5216 VOICE/TTY	1-800-870-6758 VOICE/TTY
Project Director:	651-1786	1-800-660-4427 VOICE/TTY

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